



Thursday, August 18, 2005

Contact: Ethnie Groves, Office of the Governor, 608-261-2156

## **Governor Doyle Announces Statewide Conservation Agenda, *Conserve Wisconsin***

### ***Sweeping Conservation Agenda Will Protect Wisconsin's Environment, Encourage Energy Conservation and Innovation***

MADISON, MILWAUKEE, & GREEN BAY – Governor Jim Doyle today unveiled *Conserve Wisconsin*, a broad package of legislation and executive orders that will safeguard Wisconsin's great environmental legacy. It will focus on three main areas: protecting our waters, conserving our lands, and ensuring a sustainable energy future.

"Our strategy to grow our economy is to invest in our natural strengths – our workers, our schools, and our environment," Governor Doyle said. "In my budget and as part of Grow Wisconsin, we've moved forward with real investments in our workers, and we've strengthened and protected our schools. To promote our quality of life and to continue to grow our economy, we must act now to preserve our environment for future generations."

The agenda includes: protecting and conserving Wisconsin's waters; preventing the spread of costly, destructive invasive species; preserving forest land for recreation and a healthy forest industry; cleaning up and revitalizing contaminated, blighted urban neighborhoods; promoting energy conservation and efficiency; and restoring the state's public intervenor to help citizens advocate for continuing environmental protection.

"Wisconsin's natural resources are not just part of our economy or what we do for recreation, they're a fundamental part of who we are – and we owe it to future generations to be vigilant in our protection of them," Governor Doyle said. "I don't think protecting our environment should be a partisan issue, and I'm willing to work with anyone in either party who will roll up their sleeves with me to get this done."

Governor Doyle will use executive orders to make immediate progress on the package, and will work to secure legislation where needed.

### **Highlights of the Governor's "Conserve Wisconsin" agenda include:**

#### **Protecting our Waters:**

- Introducing legislation to regulate ballast water in ocean-going ships to prevent further introduction of destructive, invasive species to the Great Lakes, the largest fresh water reservoir in the world.

- MORE -

- Designating the first rivers to State Wild River protection since 1965. Included will be the Totagatic River, which originates in Bayfield County and the St. Croix headwaters in Douglas County. Both have extremely high recreational and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and natural beauty.
- Introducing legislation to help prevent the spread of invasive species. The most effective way to stop invasive species from spreading is to make sure that they don't get transported from lake to lake. The legislation will assure that DNR has the appropriate authority to inspect boats as they come out of the water to ensure they are not transporting invasive species.
- Developing a state-wide water conservation strategy. As we have seen in this summer of drought, water conservation is critical to Wisconsin both economically and environmentally. Governor Doyle has directed DNR and the Public Service Commission to develop and implement actions to help conserve water, initially in the Great Lakes basin and ultimately statewide. And as chair of the Great Lakes Council, Governor Doyle will use his office to urge other states and provinces to increase their water conservation efforts as well.
- Making funds available more quickly to prevent polluted run-off. Farmers that have experienced discharges of manure or other polluted run-off are eligible for state money to help correct the problem. It can currently take up to 18-24 months to process the grants to farmers – all while the discharges may continue. This change would allow the DNR to provide grants on a continual basis, getting money to the problem, and fixing it as quickly as possible.
- Restoring Wisconsin's Public Intervenor. Before being eliminated by the Thompson Administration in 1995, the Public Intervenor ensured advocacy for Wisconsin's natural resources. For nearly 30 years the Public Intervenor gave ordinary citizens a place to call for technical and legal advice when they faced complicated environmental problems. Wisconsin citizens were proud that their government felt strongly enough about openness and fairness that it made sure it had a watchdog agency within government itself.

### **Ensuring a Sustainable Energy Future:**

- Passing the full recommendations of Governor Doyle's Task Force on Energy and Renewables to reduce state dependence on costly imported energy. This includes a requirement that Wisconsin get 10 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2015. With an electric bill of more than \$55 million, state government will lead the way, by purchasing 10 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2006 and 20 percent by 2010.
- Following "Green Building" standards in all new state buildings and where possible, in existing buildings. The State of Wisconsin owns 6,300 buildings that had annual energy bills of \$127 million last year. "Green Buildings," with renewable energy sources and recycled materials, can be used to substantially cut costs while providing comfortable and safe working environments.
- Directing the Public Service Commission (PSC) and DNR to investigate the potential for utilizing Integrated Gasification Combined-Cycle (IGCC) technology for energy production in the state. The technology is rapidly improving and Wisconsin needs answers about its feasibility, and potential advantages for rate payers and the environment.

- MORE -

### **Protecting our Lands:**

- Introducing legislation to create a \$1 million state Forest Legacy Program aimed at protecting large blocks of sustainably managed working forests to safeguard their environmental, economic, and recreational values to the state.
- Introducing legislation to create a grant program for cities, towns, counties, and nonprofit conservation organizations to acquire land for outdoor recreation, using existing fees paid by landowners enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program who keep their land closed to the public. The grant program will encourage the use of sound forestry practices and open more lands for recreation.
- Making the cleanup of our urban neighborhoods – the places we live, work, and play – a priority. Too often urban economic development efforts are hampered due to the high costs of ensuring a safe and economically viable neighborhood that is conducive to creating and retaining jobs. State agencies help cities and community leaders to identify target contaminated sites and to get local, state, federal, and private help in cleaning them up. Work will start with cleaning up the City of Milwaukee's 30th Street Industrial Corridor neighborhood.
- Governor Doyle will petition the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure that areas in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) remain roadless. The petition will include two areas – Porcupine Lake and Spring Brook – that are recommended for Wilderness Study under the recently approved CNNF plan. The Governor will consider whether other areas also have attributes that merit their inclusion in the petition based on information collected through the public forest management planning process.
- Creating a new tire recycling grant program. The recent fire in Watertown has cast a spotlight on the need to efficiently recycle and dispose of waste tires in Wisconsin. For the first time in the fund's history, Governor Doyle will make \$500,000 from the state's Recycling Fund available to businesses to help expand markets for recycled tires.

"Work on this conservation agenda should begin immediately," Governor Doyle said. "I will act now with my Cabinet agencies to get this going. It's time that Wisconsin refocused on what our citizens value and expect – a clean environment."

Governor Doyle made the announcement today in Madison, Milwaukee, and Green Bay, while Lieutenant Governor Lawton made the announcement in La Crosse and Eau Claire.